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ABSTRACT

Norway's career guidance system and policies were evaluated. The review team met with policymakers and guidance practitioners in the pubic and private sectors, analyzed data from a national questionnaire, and reviewed pertinent documentation. The evaluation focused on the following areas: splitting educational/vocational guidance from personal counseling; a pupil entitlement; the role of the Aetat (Norway's public employment service); developing guidance services for adults; professional development; and strategic coordination. Key strengths of Norway's career guidance system were as follows: well-established guidance and information systems within the school system and with strong local ownership; flexible but coherent pathways following the end of lower secondary education, including a well-structured follow-up service to support individuals who slip off pathways; some promising new services in higher education and private sectors; and an emerging tradition of innovation through systematic trial and evaluation. The system's identified potential weaknesses were as follows: its fragmented nature, lack of adequate links with the labor market, and lack of coherent focus for strategic planning; significant gaps in provision, especially for adults; weak professionalization; and its tendency to focus on information rather than on guidance. The following items are appended: a list of review team members; the review visit schedule; and a summary of suggestions and recommendations. (Contains 42 footnotes.) (MN)

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OECD REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE POLICIES

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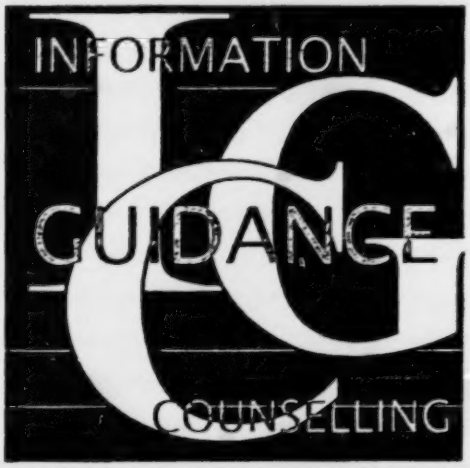

NORWAY

COUNTRY NOTE

Visit: February 2002
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1. INTRODUCTION

1. In the autumn of 2000 the OECD's Education Committee and its Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee endorsed a comparative review of career information, guidance and counselling policies. Participating countries complete a detailed national questionnaire, and after its completion host a short one-week visit by an expert review team. Norway was the third country to host such a visit, from 18 to 22 February 2002[1]. The team had meetings at the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, the Board of Education and the Directorate of Labour; it visited a university career centre, a university study guidance centre and a district employment office; meetings were held with guidance counsellors and other representatives from schools and adult education institutions; and a seminar was held whose participants included representatives of stakeholder groups (employers, trade unions, headteachers, teachers and students) as well as other organisations (including a youth information centre)[2].

2. Drawing upon the visit, the draft national questionnaire response and other documentation, this report summarises the impressions of the review team, and its suggestions for ways in which policies for career information, guidance and counselling might be developed in Norway. After a brief contextual introduction, the report describes the key features of the main parts of the system, including some comments on each. It then offers some general comments on six key topics:

- Splitting educational/vocational guidance from personal counselling.
- A pupil entitlement.
- The role of Aetat (the public employment service).
- Developing guidance services for adults.
- Professional development.
- Strategic co-ordination.

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1 For members of the review team, see Appendix 1.

2 For the review visit programme, see Appendix 2.

2. THE CONTEXT

3. Norway is a long, thin country: its thinness indicated by the fact that 85% of its population lives within 15 kilometres of the sea; its length by the realisation that if instead of travelling from Oslo to the northern tip of Norway, one travels the same distance south, one reaches Rome. The discovery of oil on the Norwegian continental shelf in the late 1960s has had a major impact on the country's economy. From being the poor relation among the Nordic countries, Norway has become the wealthiest. Among OECD countries, its GDP per capita is exceeded only by Luxembourg, Switzerland and the USA. 73.2% of the labour force are employed in the service sector (OECD average: 65.2%)[3]: two-fifths of these work in the public sector; many of the rest in small and medium-sized companies. A slowdown is expected in the petroleum sector in the next few decades, and there is considerable Government interest in encouraging entrepreneurship and building capacity to develop new areas of economic activity, particularly in knowledge-based sectors.

4. Unemployment in 2000 was low, at 3.5% (OECD average: 6.3%). It was substantially higher in the 15-24 age-group, at 10.2% (OECD average: 11.8%), but a high proportion of these were students: non-student unemployment in this age-group was only 2.3% (OECD average 5.5%). Long-term unemployment (12 months or over) as a proportion of total unemployment for all age-groups was only 6.8% (OECD average: 31.8%). Levels of job mobility are fairly high: around a quarter of all employed individuals find new employment each year[4]. Labour shortages are evident in several sectors, including health, construction, and some industrial branches. In the coming decade, demographic changes are expected to produce a decline in the growth of the labour force and an ageing of its age distribution. Labour force participation is already high at 80.7% (OECD average 70.1%), including 76.5% among women (OECD average: 61.3%). There is accordingly policy concern to support groups like immigrants and individuals with disabilities in gaining access to the labour market, and to encourage older workers to remain in the labour force[5].

5. Levels of investment in education in Norway are high, at 6.9% of GNP (OECD average: 5.7%). The proportion of 25-29-year-olds with upper secondary education is greater than in most other countries, at 92% (OECD average: 72%). Compulsory education is from age 6 to 16; since 1994 all young people have also had a statutory right to three years of upper secondary education, including the right to be admitted to one of their three preferred basic courses.

6. Under the new Competence Reform (see Section 4.5 below), adults who have a need for primary, lower secondary or upper secondary education have a right to be given access to it; moreover, those who have been employed for at least three years, and have been with the same employer for the last two, have a right to full-time or part-time leave of absence for up to three years to participate in organised education and training[6]. Besides formal learning, the reform is concerned to support recognition of non-formal learning, closer links between the education system and the workplace, and formal acknowledgement of

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3 Except where stated otherwise, these and other figures are taken from standard OECD and Norwegian Government sources.

4 Quoted in Ministry of Labour and Government Administration (2001), *The Norwegian Labour Market 2001*. Oslo.

5 *Ibid.*

6 Though there is a let-out clause here, in that requests for study leave do not have to be granted if they will be a hindrance to the proper management of the enterprise in question, and the issue of subsistence funding during study leave has not yet been resolved.

the workplace as a place of learning. In general, levels of participation in learning of adults aged 25-64 in Norway have been lower than in other Nordic countries, but higher than in all other OECD countries for which data are available[7].

3. THE NORWEGIAN GUIDANCE[8] SYSTEM

7. The formal responsibility for co-ordinating public activities relating to vocational guidance still lies, according to the Employment Act of 1947, with the Directorate of Labour. This Act is to be revised later this year (2002). In practice, the main guidance services are now located within the school system. Until the mid-1960s the guidance counsellors in schools were supported by vocational counsellors from the public employment service, and thereafter they continued to receive some structured support from this service. This however ended in the mid-1980s. Subsequently, career guidance and information services within the public employment service have been integrated into its placement and other functions.

8. In policy terms, the guidance system can be linked to a number of current policy concerns, including:

(a) The concern to maximise participation in the labour market, in order to address labour shortages which could be exacerbated by demographic changes (see para.4).

(b) The concern to maximise participation in lifelong learning, in order to enhance competence levels in the society.

(c) The strong traditional Norwegian concern for social equity as well as labour-market efficiency.

(d) The concern to address gender segregation in educational choices and in the labour market[9].

(e) The concern to boost recruitment to vocational options within upper secondary schools.

(f) The concern to address mismatches between supply and demand within the education system and in the labour market.

(g) The concern to reduce the high rates of educational drop-outs among pupils for whom Norwegian is a second language (both immigrants and indigenous groups).

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7 OECD (2001). *Thematic Review on Adult Learning: Country Note on Norway*. Paris.

8 Here and elsewhere the term 'guidance' is at times used generically, as shorthand for 'career information, guidance and counselling services'.

9 'In order to change the tendencies to an, in part, extremely gender-divided labour market, gender sensitivity should become an explicit part of the work with career counselling in the schools.' Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs (2001), *The Development of Education 1991 to 2000: National Report of Norway*, p.33. Oslo.

(h) The concern to catch drop-outs from education and to move them back into education and training before they become marginalised.

(i) The growing concern for individuals to take personal responsibility for their own lives and to be encouraged to take their own initiatives, including entrepreneurship (see para.3).

9. Career information and guidance could have an important contribution to make to the achievement of all these goals, either as a direct intervention or as a way of lubricating structural measures by helping to reconcile public with private purposes. At present, however, this contribution does not appear to be clearly articulated, and there is no coherent strategy for delivering it: for securing lifelong access to information and guidance in support of lifelong learning and sustained employability for all.

4. THE MAIN SECTORS

4.1 Schools

10. Schooling in Norway is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. Almost all pupils (98.4%) attend state-run schools. The period of compulsory schooling is divided into three main stages: lower primary (grades 1-4), upper primary (grades 5-7) and lower secondary (grades 8-10). In the larger towns and cities the lower secondary school may be separate, but in the more rural areas the three stages are often combined in the same school. Many of these are so small that children of different ages are combined in the same classroom: the scattered nature of Norway's population is demonstrated by the fact that this applies to 40% of primary and lower secondary schools. All teaching is mixed-ability: each class has a class teacher who normally remains with the same group throughout a particular stage.

11. Whereas the primary and lower secondary schools are run by the 435 municipalities, the upper secondary schools are managed by the 19 counties. Since 1994, all young people aged 16-19 have had a statutory right to three years' upper secondary education leading either to higher education or to vocational qualifications. These courses are commonly offered within the same institution. During the first year, students take one of 15 foundation courses; thereafter, some remain in school for two further years on a wide variety of advanced courses, while others take up apprenticeships comprising a second year in school followed by up to two years' on-the-job training in a workplace. Since the average number of students per school is only around 330, most schools offer only a few even of the foundation courses (though all or nearly all will be available within each county); local availability may accordingly constrain student choices[10]. To encourage parity of esteem between the general and vocational routes, care has been taken to maintain elements of general education in the vocational routes and to make it possible for those opting for these routes to acquire the additional qualifications required for entry to higher education; moving from general to vocational routes, however, tends to require 'taking one step back'. The statutory right can be extended for an extra year to take account of such changes of direction.

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10 OECD (1998), *Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life: Country Note on Norway*. Paris.

12. The Education Act states that: 'The pupils have the right to necessary guidance on education, careers and social matters'[11]. What is 'necessary' is, however, largely left to schools to define. In most cases, the service is provided mainly by teachers who function as guidance counsellors and provide both educational/vocational guidance and educational welfare counselling. About half have had a reasonably substantial training for this role, but the rest have had limited extra training or none at all (see Section 5.5 below). They have a reduced teaching load according to a formula under a collective agreement which provides for a minimum of one hour per 25 pupils. In the case of small schools, this may comprise very few hours, often allocated not to a counsellor but to class teachers. Some municipalities and (in the case of upper secondary schools) counties choose to exceed the formula, but no data appear to exist on the extent to which this is the case.

13. Within the curriculum, the goal is that 'educational and vocational guidance shall be interdisciplinary topics regarded as the responsibility of the school as a whole'[12]. Teaching about working life is in principle included in the subject syllabuses for each grade within the national curriculum for primary and lower secondary schools, but it tends to be phrased in very general terms. In practice, the main focus is from grade 8[13] and the extent of such delivery varies considerably: it is estimated that on average it amounts to only perhaps 6 hours in grade 8, 8 in grade 9, and 10 in grade 10[14], largely concentrated in social studies.

14. In addition, provision is usually made within the primary and lower secondary school for various forms of experience-based school-enterprise links. Almost all students have a week of work experience in grade 9 and some have a further such placement in grade 10. There has also been much interest in encouraging mini-enterprises in schools, linked to the interest in encouraging entrepreneurship (see para.3)[15]. To facilitate such links, the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO) has encouraged many schools to form partnership agreements with particular companies in their areas[16] (the range of such links is of course more limited in rural areas). The links potentially offer excellent opportunities to students for career exploration, but the curriculum does not seem currently to make systematic provision for the follow-up and reflection that are essential if this potential is to be harnessed.

15. Strong concerns have been expressed, especially by employers' organisations, about the extent and quality of the guidance provision within schools. Many guidance activities (which in addition to those noted above may include education and careers fairs and visits to upper secondary schools) are concentrated in grade 10 rather than adopting a more developmental approach. There is concern that pupils do not have access to individual skilled help when they need it: a survey in Oslo found that the average amount of such help received by pupils in grades 8-10 was 10 minutes[17]. In particular, there is concern that the growing number of personal and social problems brought by pupils to counsellors in upper secondary

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11 Education Act, Section 9-2.

12 Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs (1998-99), *Report to the Storting No.32*, para.4.4.6. Oslo.

13 A teacher's guide produced to support such work starts at grade 8.

14 Questionnaire response, section 7.1.

15 A special project in this area is being carried out in three counties, the objective of which is to develop a strategy on how entrepreneurship can be implemented in an adequate way in school. Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs (2001), *The Development of Education 1991 to 2000: National Report of Norway*, p.29. Oslo.

16 See OECD (1998), *op. cit.*, p.28.

17 Teig, A. (2000), *Skoleradgivning – Status og Utdanningsbehov*. Oslo University College Report 1/2000. Oslo.

schools in particular may seriously squeeze the attention they are able to pay to educational and vocational guidance issues: some counsellors spend up to 80% of their time dealing with pressing personal and social matters[18].

4.2 Other youth services

16. In addition to the services within schools, there are two other guidance services for young people: the youth follow-up service and the youth information centres.

17. The youth follow-up service was set up as part of the 1994 reform which established the statutory right to upper secondary education. One of the strongest features of the Norwegian guidance system, it is obliged to follow up all young people aged 16-19 who are neither in school nor at work. Its primary objective is to encourage these young people to return to the education system, and to give them support – in collaboration with the counsellors in the upper secondary schools – in doing so. If they are not willing to return to education, they should be helped – with the aid of the public employment service – to get a job or to be offered a place on a publicly-funded labour-market-related programme (though with unemployment being so low, few of these are now left); sometimes a mix of these strategies is found to be effective[19]. The service is managed at the county level: in some it is linked closely with the Educational-Psychological Service; in some with the counselling services in the upper secondary schools; in some with the school administration in the county's municipalities. It currently makes contact with some 14% of the age-group. About half of these are able to give quick and acceptable explanations (e.g. in private schools, or studying/working abroad); a few reject help (and are entitled to do so – since such young people are not entitled to any benefits, there are no sanctions that can be imposed); some require, and accept, intensive guidance and support.

18. The youth information centres, of which there are 13 in Norway, are part of a network of some 7,000 such centres around Europe. They are designed to service people aged 13-30; most are aged 18-22. The centres offer a drop-in service with an informal atmosphere; they also answer telephone and e-mail enquiries. They provide information on all issues, including travel, leisure, health and money problems, but they estimate that around half of their enquiries are related to choice of education or work options.

4.3 Higher education

19. Higher education in Norway was radically restructured in the early 1990s, and currently comprises 4 universities, 26 university colleges, 6 specialised university colleges, 2 national institutes of the arts, and some 20 recognised private institutions. A major Quality Reform is currently under way which is seeking to accelerate students' progress through the system, with a clearer degree structure and more coherent pathways, and with closer links with the needs of the labour market[20]. The reform seeks to make higher education more responsive both to student preferences and to labour market demand: guidance services could be seen as having a significant role to play in both respects, though this role has not yet been clearly articulated.

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18 *Ibid.*

19 The existing regulations of upper secondary schools limit the possibilities for developing customised options within the schools themselves. OECD (2001), *Education Policy Review – Lifelong Learning in Norway: Background Report*, para.373. Paris.

20 Such links have traditionally not been strong in Norwegian universities by comparison with some other OECD countries. See OECD (1997), *Thematic Review of the First Years of Tertiary Education: Country Note on Norway*, p.11. Paris.

20. The main guidance service within higher education has traditionally been the study guidance services. In universities these are commonly located in faculties and departments. They deal mainly with choices of study options as well as with related administrative procedures. In general, however, they are not equipped to deal with any related career choice or job-entry issues. In the past, such issues were felt to be unproblematic: most graduates entered public-sector employment linked to their field of study. Now, however, with the expansion of higher education and changes in the labour market, the range of graduate employment has broadened considerably and the study links have in some cases become more tenuous.

21. To address such issues, a few universities and university colleges have recently set up career centres. The centre at the University of Oslo is jointly funded by the university and by the University Foundation for Student Life (SiO) – a publicly-funded institution similar to the German *Studentenwerke* which is managed by a board with a student majority and runs a variety of services for students at institutions in its locality. The centre offers one-hour individual career guidance interviews and regular three-hour group sessions on the labour market, how degrees can be utilised and job-application techniques. It also runs a careers fair and publicises vacancies for part-time student jobs and for full-time graduate jobs. It is keen to contribute to the university's understanding of working life, and for example is beginning discussions with some faculties – spurred by the Quality Reform – on how study programmes might more explicitly develop skills transferable to the labour market. It is not, however, currently resourced or structured to play such a wider role effectively.

22. In the wake of the Quality Reform, there would seem to be a good case for encouraging universities and university colleges which have not already set up a career centre to do so, to explore possibilities for linking the centres more closely to the study guidance services (study choice and career choice issues are often closely entwined), and to exploit more fully their joint potential for supporting the aims of the reform.

4.4 Aetat (public employment service)

23. In the last couple of years the public employment service has undergone very significant changes. In 2000 its formal job-placement monopoly – which had already been eroded in practice – was formally ended. It was given a new name (Aetat) and started to develop a new range of fee-charged services for employers (including hiring of temporary workers and consultancy on restructuring, staff selection and skills enhancement). These, however, were challenged by private-sector organisations on the grounds that they were subsidised from public funds and accordingly infringed European regulations relating to free competition. As a result, the services have been withdrawn.

24. Aetat is given annual targets, priorities and economic means by the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, and reports to the ministry on a quarterly basis. Its main objectives are to contribute to an efficient labour market by helping job-seekers to quickly find suitable vacancies and by addressing the needs of those experiencing particular difficulties in the labour market. In the early 1990s the service's energies were mainly focused on the needs of the unemployed. When unemployment fell, the service's budget was reduced. Now the priority groups have been defined as the remaining hard core of long-term unemployed people, plus two groups that tend to be on the edge of the labour market: vocationally disabled people (with physical, mental or social handicaps that reduce their job opportunities) and immigrants. Aetat operates a range of training and placement services addressed particularly to these groups and is also responsible for administering their access to unemployment or disability benefits. Its services include an Employment Counselling Office in each county, staffed mainly by psychologists and special-needs teachers, which offers intensive rehabilitation counselling services for those with disabilities. This incorporates vocational guidance leading to an action plan. The aim is to encourage (largely on a voluntaristic basis) as many of them as possible to enter work, partly to reduce disability benefit payments

but mainly to increase the number of people in the labour force[21]. Five Aetat offices provide intensive services for immigrants, who are particularly strongly represented in training and other active labour market measures[22]. The long-term unemployed are required to attend a guidance interview once every three months: attendance is required if they are to continue to receive their job-seeker's allowance. They also have access to job clubs.

25. In addition to its targeted services, Aetat operates a range of services to the general public. These are largely on a self-service basis. A register is maintained of all job vacancies that are notified to the service or advertised in the public media. These are available on Aetat's website, which was voted in a magazine survey to be the third-best-designed public website in Norway[23]. In Aetat's 200 or so offices spread across the country, access to the website is provided on a walk-in basis, along with printed vacancy information, word-processing facilities for writing job applications and curricula vitae, free telephones for contacting employers, and some limited staff support. The public reception facilities at these offices have recently received a facelift: the one visited by the review team in Oslo had state-of-the-art amenities in terms of attractiveness and accessibility. In addition, a number of 'virtual employment offices' have been established in rural areas where Internet and other facilities are available, including videophones for contacting staff in the nearest Aetat office.

26. As noted in para.7, the public employment service formerly offered a vocational guidance service which was available to schools and others. Indeed, the Employment Act still formally requires it to 'provide vocational guidance to those who need it'. But with the rise in unemployment the service to schools was withdrawn in the mid-1980s, and since then vocational guidance has almost entirely disappeared as a separate service[24]. Instead it has been subsumed within the general placement services. Interestingly, it seems that in the new in-house web-based staff training programme within Aetat, vocational guidance has proved to be one of the most popular options. The training is however fairly basic in nature, and the opportunities for staff to utilise such skills would seem limited except in relation to the primary target-groups.

27. Despite this, Aetat has retained a significant place in the career guidance field not only through its information materials (e.g. its annual course catalogue *More Education?*) but also by developing a range of self-help tools, many of them web-based. These include: an interests inventory; a career choice programme which offers self-assessments of interests, work values and skills plus an occupational matching facility and help with job-seeking (Veivalg); and a career learning programme (Gradplus) adapted from the UK and addressed mainly to higher education graduates. The latter is to be placed on the Internet in autumn 2002 and meanwhile is being trialled with counsellors and end-users in a wide variety of settings including schools, a college, a university, an adult education centre and Aetat itself. There are also currently proposals under consideration to set up a callcentre, modelled significantly on Learndirect in the UK[25] though at a more modest level (initially 15 staff), to respond to information enquiries relating to

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21 Some 10% of the potential labour force are registered as disabled (National Insurance Administration Annual Report 2000). The aim for 2001 was that 48% of these should have completed a rehabilitation process and be ready to take up a job, have a job, or have started education. Ministry of Labour and Government Administration (2001), *op. cit.*, pp.20-21.

22 In 2000 immigrants accounted for about 15% of the total number of registered unemployed, but filled about 30% of the slots in active labour market programmes. *Ibid*, p.22.

23 *Nettavisen*, December 2001.

24 The only remnant we could find in Oslo was one vocational guidance counsellor who was available for a few hours at one of the Aetat offices.

25 See Watts, A.G. & Dent, G. (2002), 'Let your fingers do the walking': the use of telephone helplines in career information and guidance. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 30(1), 17-35.

learning and work. In addition, the location of Euroguidance Norway within Aetat enables it to be seen as a national resource for information on learning and work opportunities abroad, as well as a focal point for European guidance-related development projects.

28. Other plans have been mooted from time to time. One was to develop an all-age career centre in Oslo, in collaboration with the municipality: this now seems unlikely to happen. Another has been to set up one-stop shops which would bring together Aetat, social insurance services and other welfare services in the same location, so that groups at risk of social marginalisation could access the range of such services more readily[26]. There have been some pilot projects along these lines, and this idea seems currently to have more momentum behind it.

29. So far as schools are concerned, Aetat's support services are now very limited. Both at national and at local levels, Aetat is in a good position to provide the labour market information which – as noted elsewhere (para.42) – tends to be lacking in the school system. But it has no formal remit to supply such information in forms which school counsellors and pupils can understand and make sense of. Sometimes there is collaboration between Aetat and schools at local level, but it tends to be informal in nature and therefore uneven and inadequate.

30. The role of Aetat in relation to the Competence Reform (see para.6 and Section 4.5) also seems currently to be unclear and somewhat marginal, partly perhaps because of the wish to avoid unemployment benefits being used to support individuals engaged in education (except in certain closely specified cases). Yet many individuals can be readily alerted to learning opportunities, and helpfully be assessed in terms of their competence requirements, when they are engaged in job switching. Moreover, the labour-market information possessed by Aetat could help to ensure that learners' decisions about what they learn are informed in terms of labour-market demand. Again, Aetat resources like Gradplus and the proposed callcentre (para.27) could have an important role to play in support of the Competence Reform. There appear to be some potential synergies here that are not at present being exploited.

4.5 Adult education

31. The adult education system in Norway is diverse. In addition to formal education and training institutions, there is a long-standing tradition of community-based provision in the form of study associations and folk high schools.

32. The system is currently being significantly reshaped by the Competence Reform. The underlying rationale for the reform is that the tight labour market in Norway and the growing importance of a knowledge-based economy mean that every effort must be made to upgrade the skills of the workforce on a continuous basis[27]. The concept is however a broad one, and focused on lifelong learning for multiple purposes, not just vocational: it is 'based on a broad concept of knowledge, where values and attitudes, theoretical and practical knowledge and the promotion of creativity, entrepreneurship, cooperative ability and social skills are all part of a whole'[28]. The aim is that 'as far as possible, education for adults should be

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26 As recommended in OECD (2001), *Education Policy Review – Lifelong Learning in Norway: Report of the Review Team*, para.175. Paris.

27 Ministry of Labour and Government Administration (2001), *op. cit.*, p.39.

28 Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs (2001), *op. cit.*, p.20.

driven by demand: this education should be flexible, accessible and adapted to the needs of both the individual and the enterprise'[29].

33. Despite this aim, the adult education system seems still to be largely supply-driven. A recent OECD review concluded the steering mechanisms in Norway are still predominantly traditional and supply-oriented[30]. It seems that many of the resources under the Competence Reform have been going to municipalities to expand adults' access to upper secondary education, and that some other learning providers have been experiencing declining enrolments as a result. Instead of being resolved politically between providers, such issues could be resolved by placing more public funding in the hands of individual learners, with access to impartial guidance and information to help them make their own decisions about how they use such resources. To date, however, there seem to be few signs of significant moves in this direction.

34. Indeed, attention to guidance and information in the Competency Reform has so far been very limited. The Education Act states that 'adults with the right to education [the new rights outlined in para.6 of this report] ... have the right to counselling to clarify what provisions they need'[31]. We saw no sign, however, of any strategy to deliver this right. Attention so far has been confined mainly to information, much of it provider-driven (see Section 5.6), and to making individuals aware of their rights rather than helping them decide how and where they might want to use this right. A three-year project on 'motivation, guidance and information' has been initiated, to produce new, non-traditional methods for reaching out to groups which have the least enthusiasm for education: it comprises nine sub-projects on varying themes, but their briefs seem fairly limited, and the broader potential policy significance of the project does not appear to be widely recognised.

35. A related issue which has received considerable attention, though, has been assessment of prior learning. A national framework for documentation and recognition of adults' non-formal learning is to be established by August 2002, and currently 25 projects around the country are working out techniques for reviewing and assessing such learning, both for educational and for labour-market purposes. The assessments are being carried out by the network of resource centres which has been set up around the country, mainly in upper secondary schools, to carry out a brokerage role between enterprises with learning needs on the one hand and learning providers on the other. Their prior-learning assessment work could be structured as a technical exercise measuring individuals' capacity to enter a given programme, or could be permitted or even encouraged to lead into a guidance dialogue that might reflect upon, and help to clarify, the individuals' goals. The centres could also have a broader guidance and information function for individuals, possibly using resources like Gradplus (see para.27) (though there might be issues regarding their impartiality). So far, however, these potential guidance roles appear to have been given little detailed consideration.

36. The Competence Reform is also encouraging documentation and assessment of non-formal learning within enterprises, not just to facilitate re-entry to formal education but as a means of valuing and supporting the learning that can take place within the workplace. This should be linked to annual organisational plans for enhancing competencies. As part of this, it is seeking to stimulate regular career development interviews between employees and their immediate superiors. Some trade unions have also

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29 Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs (2000), *The Competence Reform in Norway*, p.3. Oslo.

30 OECD (2001), *Education Policy Review – Lifelong Learning in Norway: Report of the Review Team*, p.67. Paris.

31 Education Act, Section 4A-8.

started to train their workplace representatives to act as learning advisers. Little appears currently to be known about the extent and quality of such processes.

4.6 The private sector

37. A fairly new feature of the guidance system in Norway has been the emergence of a small private sector. The first and largest of these agencies, Emmali, was set up in 1990 and currently has five offices and five employees in different parts of the country. A further four small agencies have been set up since then. They tend to make more extensive use of psychometric tests than most other guidance services do. At present there is no public regulation of such services.

38. In addition, there are a range of 'head-hunting' and job-placement services in the private sector. The latter are mainly agencies for temporary staff. The removal in 2000 of the public employment service's formal monopoly of placement activities (para.23) has in principle provided a stimulus to such enterprises.

4.7 Information provision

39. As part of the Government's eNorway strategy, there is considerable emphasis on electronic information rather than print information: while some printed handbooks etc. are still widely used, there appears to be less print information available than in some other comparable countries. In addition to the Aetat database already mentioned (para.25), a variety of other web-based databases have been developed which provide information on educational and/or vocational opportunities. These include:

(a) The YoU database developed jointly by the National Board of Education, the Directorate of Labour and other bodies for use in schools. It contains detailed information on courses in upper secondary schools and on apprenticeships: what is offered, where it is available, and its relationship to occupations. This information is contractually supplied by the providers themselves. Links are provided to the schools' own websites and to the websites of relevant industrial associations.

(b) A database developed by the Norwegian University Network for Lifelong Learning which provides details of continuing education and training courses available at higher education level.

(c) A website on distance learning opportunities developed by the Norwegian Association for Distance Education (though funding for this has now been withdrawn).

(d) A couple of regional databases on adult learning opportunities.

40. In general, the current databases and other information resources appear to be rather provider-driven. There would seem to be a need for more customer-oriented portals and search engines, working from questions which individuals want to ask rather than from the information which opportunity providers want them to have.

41. There are also some gaps in current publicly-funded information provision. One is in relation to opportunities in higher education. Here private-sector companies appear to some extent to have filled the gap. There are however issues about whether, in the public interest, some means should be sought for quality-assuring the information such companies provide.

42. Another gap is labour-market information on supply and demand in different occupational areas, and information on salaries etc. This information is volatile but it is important that guidance services should have access to it, in forms which they and their clients can understand and make use of. There is also a lack of systematic and regularly-collected information on the destinations of students from different courses, both in upper secondary schools and in higher education. Short-term (6 months) graduate destination surveys are carried out every two years by the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU), but – as argued in an earlier OECD report[32] – a broader range of such data needs to be collected and fed back regularly to guidance counsellors, students, teachers and parents if they are to act as effective signalling systems to address mismatch problems.

43. More broadly, there seems to be a need for a more comprehensive information system on adult learning opportunities, linked to occupational opportunities, to underpin the Competence Reform. At present, as indicated in para.39, there are a number of overlapping databases, which together provide only partial coverage of what is available. A recent OECD review of lifelong learning saw 'provision of good information and consistent communication across ministries and other actors as a requisite for the learner to make an informed choice, or a choice at all'[33].

5. KEY POLICY ISSUES

5.1 Splitting educational/vocational guidance from personal counselling

44. As noted in para.15, concern has been expressed about the breadth of the school counsellor's role, and the risk that the pressing nature and apparent growth of pupils' personal and social problems may seriously reduce the amount of time which the counsellors are able to devote to educational and vocational guidance matters. Accordingly, the Government decided to set up a three-year trial project to separate the two roles by attaching them to different individuals. The project is running in four counties. It is not a comparative evaluation of the pros and cons of the split model as opposed to the integrated model: there is no control group. Instead, it is exploring ways in which the split model can be made to work effectively.

45. Some counsellors and some headteachers are opposed to separating the two roles. It is argued that pupils' different problems are often closely entwined, and that a holistic approach to intervention is likely to be more effective. It is also pointed out that the fact that 'normal' educational/vocational problems are taken to the same counsellor may remove any risk of stigma from taking personal/social problems to him or her. Furthermore, some schools which are prepared to split the role wish to split it in other ways: for example, between a man and a woman, to ensure that pupils who prefer to take their problems to a same-sex counsellor are able to do so.

46. Nonetheless, the practical arguments in favour of the split model seem to the review team to be strong. It is also pointed out that the two areas may require rather different skills and resources: the

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32 OECD (1998), *op. cit.*, p.27.

33 OECD (2001), *Education Policy Review – Lifelong Learning in Norway: Report of the Review Team*, p.70. Paris.

educational and vocational guidance work, for example, requires regular updating to keep in touch with changes in the education system and the labour market, and this may not be given sufficient attention within an integrated model. The Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry has expressed frustration that the split model is not being implemented more quickly when its merits are so self-evident. It may be, however, that some degree of flexibility may still be desirable, not least to take account of the needs of small schools. If this proves to be the case, then it will be necessary to demonstrate in other ways that educational and vocational guidance work is being adequately addressed.

47. The three-year trial project is also concerned with finding ways of improving contacts between lower secondary and upper secondary schools. An impressive programme presented to the review team was based on close teamwork between counsellors in the two sets of institutions, including weekly team meetings and a systematic programme of 'tasting' (through visits to classes) and 'testing' (through an interests questionnaire) for pupils towards the end of lower secondary school, related closely to the 15 foundation course options in the upper secondary school. It is argued that such programmes are easier to develop and deliver where responsibility for educational and vocational guidance is a separate role.

5.2 A pupil entitlement

48. Even if educational/vocational guidance and personal counselling are allocated to different roles, there remain concerns about the extent of help and support received by pupils. At present the only mechanism for specifying a level of service is the staffing formula (see para.12). It has accordingly been suggested by employers' organisations that an entitlement should be specified, under which each pupil should have access if they wish to individual sessions with a trained counsellor for an hour in each of grades 8-10. This would require a very substantial increase in staffing levels. It also suggests that individual counselling is the preferred, or even the only effective, guidance intervention.

49. There are, too, concerns about the extent and quality of the work within the curriculum. The notion of a whole-school approach across the curriculum is in principle very attractive. To work effectively, however, it requires strong co-ordination, which in turn demands strong and sustained support from headteachers and well-developed managerial and professional-support skills from counsellors. In a case-study presented to the review team, both of these were evident; moreover, provision was made for all teachers working with a particular grade to have a weekly meeting chaired by a team leader, with the counsellor attending where relevant. We strongly suspect, however, that in many schools such elements are not present, in which case the whole-school approach can be a thin veil hiding a bare cupboard: the notion that everyone should be doing guidance-related work means that no-one does it, or at least that there is nowhere where the student is helped to make personal sense of the bits and to pull them together. It is a case where the best can be the enemy of the good.

50. One way forward, which might address these various concerns, is to define a pupil entitlement which might include a number of components:

(a) Some specified individual time with a trained counsellor in each of grades 8-10 – though perhaps 30 minutes rather than an hour.

(b) At least two periods of work experience. This would make it easier to encourage pupils to explore non-traditional options related to their gender[34]: if they have only one choice, it tends to be traditional in this respect.

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[34] A project on 'Conscious Choices in Education', which documented ways of achieving a conscious gender perspective in guidance, identified work experience and the use of role models as its two key strategies.

(c) More clearly specified elements within the curriculum not only from grade 8 but from grade 1, concerned not only with understanding of working life but also with development of self-awareness and of decision-making and career-management skills.

(d) Development of a career development portfolio, to be used not just as a means of collecting information (the main current usage) but also as a tool for reflection.

51. At the same time, we acknowledge the importance of local ownership, and recognise that any model needs to be adaptable to a wide variety of situations, including that of small schools in rural areas. An appropriate approach might accordingly be to frame the national entitlement around outcomes rather than processes, but to insist upon clarity and transparency regarding processes too at local level, within a national framework developed by the Board of Education which would offer clear guidelines but also some degree of flexibility. Two key points might however be insisted upon: that the full entitlement must be included in the school plan, thus ensuring the involvement of headteachers; and that it must be issued to all parents and pupils, thus ensuring accountability at the point of need. Some external monitoring might also be introduced by incorporating appropriate questions in the annual questionnaire which the Board of Education issues to the county and municipality authorities, to be reported in the annual status reports for the school system.

5.3 The role of Aetat

52. As in many other countries, a crucial issue is the role of the public employment service in relation to lifelong learning in general and lifelong access to guidance in particular. Aetat's national network of local offices, its staff resources and its close links with the labour market all offer potentially strong contributions to lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategies. The danger is that it will not be equipped to make such contributions, because it is being used instead as a closely targeted policy instrument to tackle more specific concerns. It tends at present to be viewed as a flexible instrument to address specified target-groups that are the object of immediate policy priorities: formerly, the unemployed; currently, groups outside the labour market whom the Government wants to reintegrate into it. Yet it could be argued that its ability to address such priorities will be all the greater if such work grows out of a sustained service for all, focused on developing a quality workforce that can respond flexibly to economic and demographic changes. Such a wider role will also enable it to enhance its human resources and its links with the education system and the labour market in ways which will strengthen its targeted work, as well as avoiding the stigma that can undermine such work.

53. The review team were impressed by a number of features of Aetat's work, including:

(a) The quality of its walk-in service in Oslo, which rivalled anything that members of the team had seen elsewhere.

(b) The quality of its website, with its user-friendly and comprehensive vacancy listings.

(c) Its inventive range of web-based tools.

(d) Its imaginative plans to set up a callcentre for information on learning and work – which seems a very appropriate service in a country whose population is as scattered as Norway's.

54. In these and other ways, Aetat could have a significant role to play in supporting the current Competence Reform. But:

(a) Its generic services need to be valued and sustained, and to include a higher level of personal as well as self-service support than at present.

(b) Its role of servicing schools and higher education institutions (and possibly, as they emerge, other guidance services) with labour-market information needs to be acknowledged and resourced, and not left to the personal goodwill of staff.

(c) The callcentre, if implemented as the review team hopes it will be, needs to be seen not just as a discrete new service, but as a strategic opportunity to build a stronger and better co-ordinated guidance and information infrastructure, linked to other resources for adults in particular (for one possible model, see para.69).

5.4 Developing guidance services for adults

55. The guidance and information services available for adults are currently very limited. Aetat services, as we have seen, are at present restricted. Those enrolled in upper vocational schools have access to the guidance services available within their schools, but in general little consideration seems to have been given by these services to the distinctive needs of adults. It is revealing that the youth information centre in Oslo told us that they fairly regularly get older adults coming into their offices to discuss issues relating to education and work because they are unable to get help elsewhere.

56. The potential of the Competence Reform for transforming the models of adult learning and placing guidance and information close to the heart of the learning process is considerable. So far, however, much of the energy in implementing the reform appears to have been focused on facilitating re-entry to formal education for adults who missed out on it when they were young.

57. If the wider goals of the Competence Reform are to be addressed, a strategy is needed to ensuring that all adults have access to information and guidance when they require it. Significantly, the recent OECD Thematic Review of Lifelong Learning recorded that it had heard calls in several different settings for more attention to these areas. In relation to enhanced guidance services, it noted that no one agency 'owned' this responsibility[35].

58. It accordingly seems likely that any effective strategy will need to be based on acknowledging and supporting a range of guidance and information providers. Aetat has a key role to play, as noted in Section 5.3 above. So potentially do the resource centres (see para.35), though they need to be equipped to carry out this role. All learning providers, too, should be expected to provide guidance and information in relation to their own provision, and could also be encouraged to make learners aware of provision elsewhere -- though the more that funding is linked to recruitment, the less realistic it is to expect them to be fully impartial in this respect. The same limits regarding impartiality apply to the career development reviews offered by employers, but these reviews as well could be part of the strategy, along with the learning advice offered by trade union representatives, and community resources like libraries and voluntary organisations.

59. All these provide potential bases for building capacity for improved guidance and information services for adults. But they need recognition and support, effective networking (e.g. closer links between the resource centres and Aetat), and some form of quality assurance. This can ensure that wherever one goes, one knows what one is getting; and that if one is not getting what one needs, one is referred to where it is available elsewhere.

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35 OECD (2001), *Thematic Review on Adult Learning: Country Note on Norway*, p.29. Paris.

60. As part of this, there needs to be some access to skilled guidance from a practitioner who is qualified as being competent. There are important issues about where such resources should be based, and on what basis individuals should have access to them. One possibility might be to encourage local developments and private-sector initiatives, but within a national quality-assured framework.

5.5 Professional development

61. Currently, the level of professional development in the guidance field in Norway is weak by Nordic standards, and very sector-based. A recent survey of school guidance counsellors found that around half had had 'relevant' training (defined very broadly to include, for example, general psychology and sociology) equivalent to half a year's study, that around a quarter had had less than this, and that the remaining quarter had had no relevant training at all[36]. Moreover, their average age was 55, as opposed to 45 in a similar study ten years previously, suggesting a high level of stagnation and/or that guidance roles are regarded largely as late-career sideways moves within schools, perhaps providing a pre-retirement opportunity for teachers to reduce their time in the classroom. The advanced age of the current counsellors, alongside the proposed split between educational/vocational guidance and personal counselling, provides an excellent opportunity to review the training and career development structure, so attracting younger people to the roles.

62. In formal terms, the only specific qualifications currently required of school guidance counsellors are that they should be trained as teachers and have had two years' teaching experience. It is however widely recognised that to be effective they need to have distinctive skills and knowledge. A framework for such training was developed by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs and the National Council for Teacher Education in 1994. It covers a 20-credit course, to be studied full-time over one year or part-time over two. It seems, though, that the opportunities to take this course are currently very limited. Around one-third of the course is on career guidance, one-third on educational welfare work, and one-third on generic counselling skills: presumably, if the split between educational/vocational guidance and personal counselling (see Section 5.1) becomes more generally applicable, there will be able to be a higher degree of specialisation within the course. Salary increments are given for being appointed as a guidance counsellor, regardless of whether one has received specialist training or not.

63. A number of strong criticisms are made, by employers' bodies and others, about the current arrangements for training of school guidance counsellors. One is its voluntary nature: the notion that one can be a competent guidance counsellor simply by virtue of being trained as a teacher is strongly challenged[37]. Another is the lack of sufficiently systematic attention to the continuing need to keep up-to-date in terms of changes in the educational system and in the labour market[38]. It is indeed suggested by some that unless a stronger professional base for guidance counsellors within schools is developed soon, the function should be taken out of schools, or allocated to a separate guidance professional within the

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36 Teig, A. (2000), *op. cit.*

37 The issue could, indeed, be a matter of legal challenge. We were told of one case where a student who, because of incompetent guidance, had had to take an extra study year had been paid NKR 114,000 by the school to avoid being taken to court.

38 As one measure to address this, funds have been allocated by municipalities to observation visits to enterprises by teachers and guidance counsellors, and a guide has been issued by the Board of Education to support such visits. Questionnaire response, section 2.5.

school who might not be a teacher[39] (a further argument for this is that it might reduce the perceived bias of current guidance counsellors towards academic rather than vocational options).

64. It is accordingly currently being proposed that the provisions regarding individual guidance in the Education Act should be amended to include a reference to guidance being given by a *qualified* person, and that this should be the case regardless of the age of the clients[40]. The review team endorses this suggestion and suggests that the training programme be adapted so that it is appropriate for those working in other sectors too – for example, in higher education career centres and study guidance services, in youth information centres, in resource centres or in other adult education settings. At present, there is no systematic training for such staff. A modular structure built around a common core would enable individuals working in different settings to be trained together but with attention to their distinctive sectoral needs. This might facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration as well as opening up new career-development paths across sectoral boundaries – particularly so if appropriate links could be made with the guidance elements in the modular internal training for Aetat staff (see para.26).

65. The main professional association for guidance counsellors is the Norwegian Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (NAEVG). Its membership is however confined almost entirely to guidance counsellors in schools and to staff of the follow-up service. Staff of higher education careers services look instead for professional support to the Nordic Forum for Higher Education Careers Services, which also covers the other Nordic countries; while study advisers in higher education have no professional association but have their own annual national conference. There is as yet no guidance professional association for those working in guidance roles with adults. If such work grows, there would seem to be a strong case for extending the boundaries of NAEVG to cover all sectors, possibly with a federal structure to enable sectoral interests to be addressed.

5.6 Strategic co-ordination

66. As noted in para.7, the Directorate of Labour currently has a formal legal responsibility for co-ordinating public activities relating to vocational guidance. As, however, its own stake in the guidance system as reflected in the activities of the public employment service (Aetat) has declined, this role has been given little attention. Accordingly, in December 2001 a working group was set up by the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration to clarify the distribution of responsibilities between the education authorities and Aetat regarding guidance and information services for the various client-groups. Part of the remit is to outline the possibilities for co-operation and co-ordination between national authorities in this field and to develop a national action plan.

67. We hope that our report will be a useful input into the reflections of this working party, and that the working party will examine our various suggestions for improving guidance and information provision in Norway. As one of these suggestions, we propose that – wherever the formal legal responsibility for co-ordination may lie in the future – a permanent national body should be set up to act as a focal point for strategic co-ordination in this field. If the focus is to be lifelong, then a mechanism is needed for linking sectoral activities within this perspective. It also seems that at present sectoral policies and instruments are viewed as separately steering their regional actors too heavily, thus allowing too little room for co-

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39 As was done in Sweden in the 1970s. See Watts, A.G. (1981), Careers guidance in Sweden: a British perspective, *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 4(3), 187-207.

40 Questionnaire response, section 3.1.

ordination at the regional level[41]. The need for stronger and more sustained leadership in the field emerged as a theme in several of our meetings: the proposed body could provide such leadership.

68. The body should include representatives of both ministries: the essence of effective guidance and information provision is that it cross-cuts learning and work, and the interests of the individual and the labour market. Accordingly, it should also include representatives of bodies like the Board of Education and the Directorate of Labour, of stakeholder bodies (employers, trade unions, parents, students), and of the guidance professionals. Its tasks might include:

(a) To develop common definitions of what is meant by career guidance, counselling and information, and of other key terms in the field (there seems to be some confusion about such terms at present).

(b) To clarify individuals' career development needs across the life-span and to review how far these are currently being met (possibly with the aid of some market research).

(c) To develop competence standards for guidance practitioners and quality standards for organisational delivery of career guidance and information provision.

(d) To encourage collaboration and innovation, within a sustained common vision.

69. There might also be a case for setting up co-ordinating bodies at a regional level, to support the national body's consultative processes and to develop operational strategies for collaboration that are closer to the point of delivery. These might include staff-development activities. In addition, consideration might be given to splitting the proposed callcentre (para.27) into regional centres linked to these regional co-ordinating bodies, to enable callers to be passed more readily to face-to-face services where this seems appropriate[42].

70. The current Competence and Quality Reforms provide an excellent opportunity to establish such a structure, to underpin the implementation of these reforms.

6. CONCLUSIONS

71. The *strengths* of the Norwegian educational and vocational guidance system include:

(a) Well-established guidance and information services within the school system, with strong local ownership.

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41 Questionnaire response, section 3.5.

42 This is a possible alternative to the imaginative structure currently being discussed, which is to locate the callcentre at an institution responsible for training guidance counsellors, so that it could be staffed at least in part by such individuals as part of their training programme.

(b) Flexible but coherent pathways following the end of lower secondary education, with a well-structured follow-up service to support individuals who slip off these pathways.

(c) Some promising new services, e.g. in higher education, in the private sector, and in the development of web-based databases.

(d) An emerging tradition of innovation through systematic trial and evaluation.

72. The *weaknesses* of the system include:

(a) The fragmented nature of current provision, with many education-based services lacking strong enough links with the labour market, and with no coherent focus for strategic development.

(b) Significant gaps in provision, particularly for adults.

(c) Weak professionalisation.

(d) Perhaps because of (c), a tendency to focus more on information than on guidance.

73. The current situation in Norway appears to offer major *opportunities* for significant development in the field of career guidance, in three main respects; in each case, however, the opportunities are linked to risks. The three areas are:

(a) Current reforms – notably the Competence Reform and the Quality Reform, with their concerns for widening access to learning and strengthening the links between learning and work – provide opportunities for placing career information and guidance in a more central role and paying sustained attention to their development. But as yet the role of career information and guidance in these reforms has not been clearly articulated. The *risk* is that if it is not articulated soon, a major opportunity will have been missed.

(b) Aetat has a capacity for innovation, a wish to deliver sustained universal services as well as targeted services addressing current policy priorities, and a willingness to work with the education-based services in remedying some of their weaknesses and shortcomings – which it is well placed to do. It has therefore a potentially crucial role to play in any new strategy for lifelong access to career information and guidance. The *risk* is that this capacity will not be valued, and will be regarded as a deflection from their targeted services, rather than as something which can strengthen these services as well as being of considerable value in its own right.

(c) There is a strong interest in career information and guidance provision from key stakeholder groups – notably employers, but also trade unions, parents and students. This could be valuable both in articulating the need for improved career information and guidance services and as potential resources to help in addressing it. The *risk* is that the lack of frameworks and structures to harness this energy means that it will not lead to effective action.

APPENDIX 1: OECD REVIEW TEAM

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APPENDIX 2: REVIEW VISIT PROGRAMME

Monday 18 February

09.00 Meeting with key officials at Ministry of Education and Research

13.30 Meeting with key officials at Ministry of Labour and Government Administration

Tuesday 19 February

09.00 Meeting with key officials at Board of Education

14.00 Meeting at University of Oslo with representatives of the Norwegian Association of Adult Education, the Norwegian Association of Distance Education, the Oslo Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, and the University of Oslo (including the career centre)

16.30 Visits to University of Oslo career centre and study guidance centre

Wednesday 20 February

09.00 Meeting with a principal and a counsellor from a lower secondary school and with a counsellor from an upper secondary school

10.30 Seminar with representatives of the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry, the Confederation of Vocational Unions, the Educational Union, the school principals' organisation, the pupils' organisation, the youth information centre in Oslo, a lower secondary school, an upper secondary school, the Norwegian Board of Education, and the Ministry of Education and Research (16 participants in total)

13.00 Meeting with Junior Minister, Ministry of Education and Research

14.00 Continuation of seminar

Thursday 21 February

09.00 Meeting at Directorate of Labour

13.30 Visit to district employment office in Oslo

16.00 Meeting with representative of Vox (National Institute of Adult Education)

Friday 22 February

12.00 Debriefing session with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research, the National Board of Education, and the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, chaired by a political adviser from the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration.

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestion/recommendation	See para(s).
In the wake of the Quality Reform, encourage universities and university colleges which have not already set up a career centre to do so, explore possibilities for linking the centres more closely to the study guidance services, and exploit more fully their joint potential for supporting the aims of the reform	22
Equip the network of resource centres to offer guidance and information to adults, and to strengthen the guidance aspects of their prior-learning assessment work (paras.35 and 58).	40
Explore possibilities for developing more customer-oriented portals and search engines, working from questions which individuals want to ask rather than from the information which opportunity providers want them to have	
Examine whether some means should be sought to quality-assure information provided by the private sector on educational and vocational opportunities, especially where it fills gaps in public information provision	41
Acknowledge and resource the role of Aetat in servicing schools, higher education institutions and other guidance services with labour market information	42 and 54b
Explore ways in which systematic information on the destinations of students from different courses, both in upper secondary schools and in higher education, could be collected regularly and made available to guidance counsellors, students, parents and teachers	42
Develop a more comprehensive information system on adult learning opportunities	43
Implement the proposed split in schools between educational/vocational guidance and personal counselling; where there are special reasons for keeping these together in the same role, ensure in other ways that educational and vocational guidance work is being adequately addressed	46
Define a national framework for a pupil guidance entitlement in the primary and lower secondary school (to include, for example, 30 minutes' individual time with a trained counsellor in each of grades 8-10, at least two periods of work experience, more clearly specified elements within the curriculum, and a career development portfolio): frame the national entitlement around outcomes, but insist that the entitlement on processes, agreed locally within the national framework, be included in the school plan, issued to all pupils and parents, and monitored through the Board of Education's annual questionnaire to the county and municipality authorities	51

Value and sustain the generic guidance-related services offered by Aetat, alongside its targetted services, and include a higher level of personal as well as self-service support than at present	52-54
Implement Aetat's proposal for a new callcentre service for information on learning and work, and view it as a strategic opportunity to build a stronger and better co-ordinated guidance and information infrastructure, linked to other resources for adults in particular	54c
Develop a strategy for ensuring that all adults have access to information and guidance when they require it, by providing recognition and support, effective networking and some form of quality assurance for a variety of providers from whom such help can be sought	57-59
As part of this strategy, ensure there is some access to skilled guidance from a practitioner who is qualified as being competent, possibly by encouraging local developments and private-sector initiatives within a national quality-assured framework	60
Amend the provisions in the Education Act to include references to guidance being given by a qualified person	64
Develop a new modular structure for training guidance professionals, to enable individuals working in different sectors to be trained together but with attention to their distinctive sectoral needs	64
Extend the boundaries of the Norwegian Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance to cover all sectors, possibly with a federal structure to enable sectoral interests to be addressed	65
Establish a permanent national body to act as a focal point for strategic co-ordination and leadership in the field of career guidance, supported by co-ordinating bodies at a regional level	67-96

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